Message Text

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PAGE 01 TRIPOL 00521 070550Z ACTION NEA-10

R 061500Z APR 78 FM AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5348 INFO AMEMBASSY CAIRO AMEMBASSY TUNIS AMEMBASSY VALLETTA USCINCEUR

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CINCEUR FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: N/A TAGS: EFIN, LY

SUBJECT: LIBYAN BUDGET DIFFICULTIES

- 1. US OIL COMPANY OFFICIAL INFORMED EMBASSY THAT DURING RECENT NEGOTIATIONS WITH LIBYAN PETROLEUM AUTHORITIES LATTER STRESSED SERIOUS BUDGETARY PROBLEMS FACING LIBYAN GOVERNMENT.
- 2. US COMPANY WAS SEEKING PRICE MODIFICATIONS IN ORDER TO MOVE MORE LIBYAN CRUDE IN CURRENT GLUT SITUATION. EXPLAINING REASONS FOR LIBYAN INABILITY TO FULLY ACCOMMODATE US COMPANIES, BOTH PETROLEUM MINISTER MABRUK AND NATIONAL OIL COMPANY CHAIRMAN MUNTASSER IN APPARENTLY FRANK DISCUSSION SAID LIBYA WAS FACING REVENUE SHORTAGES AND WAS IN NO POSITION TO SUFFER FURTHER LOSSES OF INCOME.
- 3. WE HAVE BEEN AWARE FROM REPORTS OF BRITISH, YUGOSLAV, LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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ROMANIAN AND POLISH FIRMS OPERATING IN LIBYA THAT THEY HAVE AGAIN BEEN EXPERIENCING LENGTHY AND SERIOUS PAYMENT DELAYS. THIS PHENOMENON HAS OCCURRED IN THE PAST BUT HAS USUALLY BEEN TRANSITORY. IN THIS INSTANCE COUNTRIES CONCERNED BELIEVE THAT PROBLEM IS MORE THAN BUREAUCRATIC AND THAT LIBYA DOES INDEED HAVE A LIQUIDITY PROBLEM.

4. EVEN WITH REDUCTION IN REVENUES DUE TO SLIGHT FALL IN OIL PRODUCTION (DOWN FROM APPROX 2.1 TO 1.8-1.9 MILLION BPD FOR LAST SEVERAL MONTHS) REASONS FOR FINANCIAL BIND UNCLEAR. CERTAINLY PLANNING ERRORS AND GENERAL ADMINISTRATIVE INEFFICIENCY ARE PARTIALLY RESPONSIBLE. ON OTHER HAND VASTLY INCREASED EXPENDITURES FOR MILITARY PURCHASES AND FOR "AID" TO KINDRED COUNTRIES OR GROUPS, ABOUT WHICH WE HAVE LITTLE INFORMATION, MAY ALSO BE FACTOR. CARLE

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